



Allure Article – for Sunday, March 2009

Open To Peace That Passes Understanding

The further I go in life, the more I am resolving to be joyful. Happiness is becoming my natural state of being. I walk through daily experiences asking to stay centered, seeking to breathe peace. I continually renew my intention to stay calm in the midst of “minor” disappointments, challenging relationships, health concerns of loved ones, times of financial chaos and even the occasional seemingly insurmountable problem that appears out of nowhere.

As I grow in this practice, I am finding that I can often chuckle as life’s intensities rush at me. Rather than fretting, defending or attacking, I am seeing that I can hold the tension of the conflict in my heart, inviting Spirit to help me view it in a different way. As I do this, I can “let it all be” with relative equanimity.

I am learning that it is possible to offer gratitude to everyone for everything. I can appreciate the person who critically scrutinizes my approach, suggesting that I’m doing something inadequate or wrong. How interesting that they think and feel that way. They remind me of ways I used to talk to myself. Now, whenever I can, I just listen. I open to take in all perspectives. As the peace in my interactions increases, I am becoming clearer on who I am, how I want to live, and what I stand for.

The gift they give me is to show me I’ve outgrown the need to judge myself. The more honest and open I’ve become with myself, the gentler I can be with others. Difficult situations give me the chance to realize how comfortable I am in my own skin—I’ve grown so much! When someone disapproves, I recognize it as an opportunity to accept them, to choose not to judge in return as I used to.

This new approach has shown me the truth that there are no accidents in the Universe. Everything is part of a grand Design. My emotions need not rush in and out like unruly ocean waves. I can become one with the movements of life, approaching the constant changes with anticipation: Will I ride the crest of this wave or let it take me under, gasping for air? It all depends on what I want to experience. Life has its tides, its cycles, its ups and downs. I can choose to flow with them all.

I am discovering that it is not my circumstances that cause me pain; the way I interpret them limits me. It is my decision to resist what is happening or to move with it. Let me give an example. Several years ago, my older daughter Maggie had a serious asthma attack. She was struggling to breathe as we rushed her to the hospital and had her admitted. My focus was negative. I was overcome with fear: “This shouldn’t be happening. What if I lose my daughter?...” For me, her hospital stay was one exhausting nightmare. I couldn’t eat or sleep. It never occurred to me that my frenzied state kept me from being fully available to support my daughter.

Fast forward two years. Again we rush Maggie to the hospital unable to breathe on her own. This asthma attack was so severe that Maggie had to be flown by helicopter to a larger facility. I refused to succumb to my fear. Of course I was concerned, aware of possible outcomes. However, I remained calm, assuring myself and my daughter that everything would be okay.

As they lifted Maggie's stretcher into the back of the helicopter and pointed me to a seat, I focused my mind on the positives. I sat back, breathed deeply and watched as we swiftly lifted off and swung toward the city with amazing speed. I marveled at the moment. It was amusing to see the tiny houses and toy cars below us. I appreciated the beauty of the landscape below me even while remaining acutely aware of the apparent danger Maggie was in.

After an hour in the emergency room Maggie was stabilized. How grateful I was for the medical and technological resources available to us! This hospital stay had a wonderfully different tone. I was present for Maggie and my peace was contagious. We actually had fun.

What turned the first situation into a painful drama was the fearful interpretation I projected onto it. Could Maggie have died either time? Yes. Did she? No. The first time I was living painful futures in my mind. The second time, I was in the moment, leaving the future in the hands of God.

Now that I am aware of how much power I have in choosing how I interpret my life experience, I am finding I can relish each moment. Every second can be fascinating and rich, even those we automatically label as "bad". When I decide to allow life to be what it is, and allow people to be who they are I can be truly peaceful. When I don't, I suffer.

In working to transform my life experience, I developed a simple, three step process that I call *Harness Your Power*. It has worked for me and many others. Perhaps it can help you too. Let me briefly introduce these steps to you right now. In future articles I'll flesh each one out for you.

1. Observe your mind. Look closely at the mental chatter. How many of your 40,000 – 50,000 thoughts per day cause you worry, self-doubt, limitations, judgment, guilt, shame and fear? Just notice. Watch your thoughts closely for a full week. Jot down thoughts that upset, drain, or depress you. By putting these on paper, you will begin to see the way your thoughts color (even control) your life experience.
2. Consciously create new thoughts. Then choose to use them. Your current thought patterns are habits – you've been practicing many of them since your youth. It's up to you now to decide if you want to stick with these old ways of thinking and their subsequent life results. If you would like to change your approach, you can begin to do this one thought at a time. You can take each fear-based thought or belief and create a new hope-filled one. Here's the sequence: See the old, create the new, and then use the new.
3. Practice, practice, practice. Your new thoughts will become your habit if you practice them. Build your mental muscles. When you feel the old thought patterns taking over, pay attention. Stop. Decide to focus on something positive, a thought that will instead excite, inspire and empower you. With time, these happy, comforting thoughts will become second nature.

This process is simple to use but it takes relentless willingness on a moment by moment basis to choose faith rather than doubt, acceptance rather than judgment, love rather than fear.

By consistently harnessing the power of my thoughts, I am completely revamping my life experience. I am finally beginning to actualize the peace that passes understanding. More and more I can remain centered, listening for guidance in situations that would before have seemed tragic and debilitating.

For my journey to this point, I am deeply grateful. Does my journey reflect your experience? If so, I trust your heart is singing as you read this. If not, invite you to join with me and millions of others across the World who are waking up to a whole new way of living life.

If you would like to hear more ideas on how to live life with complete peace, please check out my inspirational video clips shown each Friday morning at 7:35 a.m. on Today on STV (on both Silverbird TV and DSTV.) If you can't catch them on TV, you can see them on www.youtube.com . Just search by my name.

Food For Thought

“If you realized how powerful your thoughts are, you would never think a negative thought.”

Peace Pilgrim

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Patricia Omoqui is an internationally recognized inspirational speaker, life coach and writer. Patricia's mission in life is to inspire people to move beyond fear so they can reach their full potential.

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